

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 AID-05 OMB-01 IGA-01 /050 W

----- 027873

R 220656Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6008

INFO USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 10127

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS ET US

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF US-ETHIOPIAN SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP

REF: A. STATE 195237 DTG 161821Z AUG 75

B. STATE 195232 DTG 161744Z AUG 75

1. THE SENSE OF FRUSTRATION EXPRESSED IN REFTEL A IS FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND EMPHATICALLY SHARED BY ALL IN THIS EMBASSY AND THE MAAG. HERE, THE SAME FRUSTRATIONS THAT SURROUND SECURITY ASSISTANCE MATTERS EXTEND TO LITERALLY EVERY FACET OF ALL USG PROGRAMS THAT REQUIRE REFERRAL TO THE DIRG. WHILE THIS IS AN UNFORTUNATE FACT OF LIFE THAT UNDULY COMPLICATES THE OTHERWISE SIMPLE TASKS OF EVERY MEMBER OF THIS MISSION IN DEALING WITH THE EPMG, IT MUST NONETHELESS BE OBJECTIVELY ACCEPTED AS ONE OF THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH WE MUST OPERATE FOR THE SAKE OF LARGER USG OBJECTIVES IN ETHIOPIA. WE ARE DEALING WITH AN EVOLVING GOVERNMENT AND A CHANGING SOCIETY, WHICH DEFIANTLY AND SOMETIMES IRRATIONALLY REJECT ESTABLISHED ASSOCIATIONS AND PATTERS OF BEHAVIOR SOLELY ON THE GROUNDS OF THEIR "OLD GOVERNMENT" TAIN. EPMG HAS ITS OWN INTERNAL FRUSTRATIONS, DILEMMAS AND CONFLICTS AS THEY TRY TO RECONCILE THEORY AND IDEAL WITH OBJECTIVE REQUIREMENTS, AND WE SUFFER ALONG WITH THEM.

2. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, EXASPERATED THOUGH WE MAY ALL BE, WE DO NOT THINK VENTING OUR FRUSTRATION WILL BE OF MUCH HELP.

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SMOOTH AND PROMPT EPMG COMPLIANCE WITH USG SECURITY ASSISTANCE

PROCEDURES IS CERTAINLY DESIREABLE, BUT IS NOT RPT NOT OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE. BROADER USG INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES REQUIRE THAT WE GET ALONG TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE EXTENT WITH EPMG DESPITE STRESS BETWEEN US AND DESPITE UNDERSTANDABLE EXASPERATION ON USG SIDE. STRESSES WITHIN THE DIRG ARE CAUSED ON THE ONE HAND BY THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE US-EPMG RELATIONSHIPS DESTROYED AND ON THE OTHER BY THOSE WHO EITHER FAIL TO GRASP THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OR WHO ARE SIMPLY SUSPICIOUS OF US MOTIVES. SATISFACTION OF HAVING RIGHT AND LOGIC ON OUR SIDE WILL NOT COMPENSATE US FOR DAMAGE TO USG INTERESTS IF ANTI-US ELEMENTS TERMINATE THE RELATIONSHIP BECAUSE OF OUR TACTICS AND LACK OF FOREBEARANCE.

3. FURTHERMORE, WE DO NOT THINK THE PROBLEM IS ENTIRELY ONE-SIDED. REF B IS A DETAILED HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF OUR PROBLEMS SOMEWHAT SLANTED TOWARDS BLAMING THE EPMG AND LEAVING OUT A NUMBER OF PAST DEFICIENCIES ON OUR SIDE AND AGAINST WHICH EPMG COULD LAUNCH LEGITIMATE COUNTER-COMPLAINTS. FOR EXAMPLE, PARA TWO ADDRESSING THE F-5A PROBLEM IS TRUE AS FAR AS IT GOES, BUT OBJECTIVITY SHOULD HAVE REQUIRED THE ADDITION OF A STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT WHILE NO PROMISE OF EARLY DELIVERY WAS MADE, USG OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON DID INDICATE HOPE FOR EXPEDITED DELIVERY; THEREFORE, EPMG HAD REASON TO BE DISAPPOINTED WHEN INFORMED DELIVERY WOULD NOT BE UNTIL FIRST OR SECOND QUARTER OF FY76.

IN REGARD TO F-5E'S, GOE SUBMITTED LETTER OF INTENT IN DEC 74 AFTER WHICH USG CONDUCTED DISCUSSIONS OVER LONG PERIOD OF TIME WITHOUT REACTING. ONLY IN JUNE WAS EPMG TOLD THAT DELIVERY DATE FOR THE FIRST AIRCRAFT WOULD NOT BE UNTIL DEC 75. IN GENERAL, AND IN SPITE OF JUSTIFICATION, USG HAS A HISTORY OF PROLONGED DECISION-MAKING ON MAJOR END-TIMES THAT HAS GIVEN EPMG FALSE IMPRESSION THAT USG IS AN UNRELIABLE SUPPLIER.

4. WHAT IS REQUIRED HERE, IT SEEMS TO US, IS AN EXPLORATION OF WAYS TO OVERCOME WHAT AMOUNTS TO A SENSE OF FRUSTRATION ON BOTH SIDES. WE HAVE REPEATEDLY POINTED OUT TO EPMG IN VERY VIGOROUS TERMS THE HIGHLY UNDESIDREABLE CONSEQUENCES OF MANY EPMG ACTIONS AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE WISH INCOMING REFTELS HAD TAKEN ACCOUNT OF THIS AND REGRET THAT NEITHER WAS ABLE TO MAKE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS BEYOND THSE
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WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKING.

5. WE DO FULLY CONCUR WITH PROPOSAL TO HOLD QUARTERLY LIAISON CONFERENCES AND AN EARLY VISIT BY ISA AND DSAA REPS TO ADDIS ABABA. REVIEW OF REF B REVEALS THE FOLLOWING MAJOR AREAS REQUIRING DISCUSSION, CLARIFICATION AND/OR DECISION BETWEEN COUNTRY TEAM AND DOD REPS:

A. DUAL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS:

THE VERY NATURE OF THE POST-ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY, AS WELL AS DIFFICULTY OF COMMUNICATING BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, IMPEDES DEFINITIVE UNDERSTANDING, AND TIMELY AND POSITIVE ACTION BY THE ETHIOPIAN CHARGE. PRESENCE OF THE NEWLY-ARRIVE MILITARY ATTACHE MAY BE BENEFICIAL TO SOME DEGREE, BUT WE SHOULD SEEK SOME MEANS FOR IMPROVING TIMELINESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR OWN COMMUNICATIONS. AS AN ALTERNATIVE, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO POSSIBLE ELIMINATION, OR AT LEAST REDUCTION OF, RELIANCE ON THE ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AS A CHANNEL FOR EPMG SUBMISSION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE REQUESTS. SUCH CHANNEL WOULD CONTINUE TO BE APPROPRIATE FOR EPMG REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION, PROVIDED INFORMATION FURNISHED IS SIMULTANEOUSLY PASSED TO AMEMBASSY/MAAG IN ADDIS. WHILE IT HAS SEEMED IN THE PAST TO BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR PRESENTATION OF LOA'S HERE IN ADDIS, SUCH PROCEDURE APPEARS NOW TO HAVE MERIT IN THAT IT WOULD MORE CLEARLY PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON EPMG FOR EITHER DELAYING OR TAKING ACTION.

B. US FOCAL POINT FOR LOA'S:

A REQUIREMENT FOR A SUG MATRIX AUTHORITY OR FOCAL POINT WHICH COULD PULL TOGETHER AND COORDINATE LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE PERTAINING TO SPECIFIC PURCHASES IN A LOGICAL SEQUENCE THEREBY AVOIDING MANY OF THE COMPLICATIONS EXPERIENCED WITH MOND AS CURRENTLY REFLECTED IN THE RADAR AND F-5E CASES.

6. IN REGARD TO SENDING A TEAM HERE IN MID-SEPT FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS CITED IN REFTELS, THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION IN MID-DEPT THERE WILL BE A MAJOR RESHUFFLING OF GOVERNMENTAL MINI-CONFIDENTIAL

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STERS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING MIN OF NATL DEF, AND THAT GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE WILL BE REVISED TO SET UP A REPUBLIC. WE HOPE THIS MAY REDUCE PRESENT BEHIND-THE-SCENES DIRG OBSTRUCTIONISM, BUT CANNOT COUNT ON IT. IN FACT, IN SHORT TERM SUCH A SHAKE-UP WILL LIKELY SLOW DOWN ALREADY CIMBERSOME PROCESS UNTIL NEW MINS AND STAFFS ARE "UP TO SPEED." IN ANY EVENT, WE WILL HAVE TO AWAIT SHAKE-DOWN OF NEW OFFICIALS BEFORE ANY INNOVATIONS WILL BE POSSIBLE. IF THIS RESHUFFLING TAKES PLACE, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE COULD TAKE PLACE BETWEEN MOND AND YOUR TEAM; HOWEVER, COUNTRY TEAM WILL BE MOST APPRECIATIVE FOR OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS CITED WITH THE TEAM.

7. CMAAG BY SEPARATE MESSAGE TO DOD WILL PROVIDE ASSESSMENT OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES ON 22 AUG 75.

8. THIS MESSAGE PREPARED JOINTLY WITH MAAG.
HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY EQUIPMENT, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: woolflhd
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS10127
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750290-1170
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750824/aaaaauzp.tel
Line Count: 171
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 195237
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: woolflhd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; RELEASED <25 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; RELEASED <25 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>;
RELEASED <25 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; RELEASED <25 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by woolflhd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSESSMENT OF US-ETHIOPIAN SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP
TAGS: MASS, ET
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006